

Maxwell (G.) Agent to Sir S. Gideon Bart

OBSERVATIONS,

ON Mr. MAXWELL'S

REASONS

OFFERED TO THE

PROPRIETORS OF ESTATES

IN THE

NORTH LEVEL,

AGAINST THE INTRODUCTION OF ANY

NEW TAX.

PETERBOROUGH;

PRINTED BY J. JACOB, MDCCLXXXVIII.

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O B S E R V A T I O N S,

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T O T H E

P R O P R I E T O R S O F E S T A T E S I N T H E N O R T H L E V E L ,

A G A I N S T T H E I N T R O D U C T I O N O F A N Y N E W T A X .

H A V I N G lately met with a Publication signed GEO. MAXWELL, Agent to Sir Sampson Gideon, Bart. intitled "Reasons offered to the Proprietors of Estates in the North Level, against the Introduction of any New Tax."

As a Proprietor, I could not help being very much struck with it, and alarmed at an Attempt to introduce a Plan, which on first Consideration appeared to me, as to Mr. Maxwell, absolutely unnecessary and improper; and as I should be no very inconsiderable Contributor to a new Tax, it gave me much Concern to think that a Plan should be in Agitation, which if carried into Execution would be so injurious to my own, and the Country's Interest.—And in order to convince other Proprietors I might happen to meet with,

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the Propriety of Mr. Maxwell's reasoning, I too was led into an Investigation of the Subject, which on further considering I was surpris'd to discover, that instead of Reasons, Mr. Maxwell had substituted Opinion; instead of Facts, bold Assertions; that his Statements were founded in Error and Partiality; and his Purpose seeming to be SOMETHING, widely differing from THE PRESERVATION OF THE NORTH LEVEL.

To undeceive others, who like myself, may at first be misled by the apparent Solicitude of Mr. Maxwell for their Interests, and that Statements and Sentiments so erroneous in so great a Concern, may not go forth to the Public unnoticed, has impelled me to this Publication, and if what is here offered, shall prove of any use to a single Individual and awaken their Attention to their real Interest, I too shall be sufficiently gratified for my Trouble.

And first with respect to the "Plan for raising Money to maintain and preserve the Works belonging to the North Level, and for the discharging the Debts contracted thereon"—an anonymous or less respectable Writer than Mr. Maxwell might be suspected of having invented it himself, for the Purpose of shewing his Ingenuity in objecting to it, for such an one, hath certainly never appeared before the Public; but from Mr. Maxwell's Declarations it seems there is one somewhere, For he says, the Application for it, is premature, and that a *Scheme* for a new Tax of 1s. per Acre, is meant to be introduced for 13 years, and from what he says further, it appears that Application to Parliament, is intended to be made for it, the ensuing Sessions, if so, and Mr. Maxwell knows it, it will undoubtedly be kind in him to apprise the Public thereof, and who is the Proposer of it,—indeed the Public have a Right to expect it of him.

But with respect to Mr. Maxwell's Observations on the Funds that form the Revenues of the North Level.

His Statement of the Corporation Fund is certainly right, and 1062l. 17s. 4d. has been the annual Fund for the Support of the Outring Banks of the North Level, and Payment of Officers and Collectors Salaries since the year 1779, deducting from which the Sum of 41l. paid annually to the Trustees for the Welland Bank

Bank and Road, towards the Repair of the said Bank, and 77l. to Officers for Salaries, leaves the annual Sum of 944l. 17s. 4d. for Repairs of the North Bank, Car Dyke, and Folly Banks from 1779 until Christmas next, when that Fund will be reduced (after deducting the Sums beforementioned) to the Sum of 346l. 11s. 10d. as appears by a Printed State of the Revenue Debt and Works of the Corporation of Bedford Level for the North Level, and as is stated too in the Act of 19th GEO. III. — This Fund Mr. Maxwell admits may be insufficient for such Purposes, and takes it upon himself to say, what Sum, viz. 800l. per Annum will be sufficient, stating as a Reason the wonderfully encreased Size and Strength of the North Bank since the year 1779, and the Improvement of the Outfall, which renders *a large, and strong Bank the less necessary*. Now, How does Mr. Maxwell prove it has so wonderfully increased in Size and Strength, since the year 1779? It was not at any time during that Period, in the least Danger of breaking—we have his Assertion for it, it is true — And it is also true, that some Parts of it, are of late greatly encreased in Size and Strength, having been lately repaired, and it is also certain, that some Parts of it, are at this very time unequal to resisting a great Flood, and that some Parts of it have been, and are constantly decreasing, (without almost constant Repair) in Size and Strength, particularly the Silt Bank—yet all this avails but little — *A large and strong Bank will always be necessary*, nor will those who have experienced former Breaches ever be persuaded to the contrary; those who have not, may be more credulous; and supposing it to be so now, the Fund to keep it in such State, is undoubtedly insufficient: to increase which, to the Fund Mr. Maxwell supposes necessary; he proposes that his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and Sir Sampson Gideon, shall purchase off, at 30 years Purchase, their 6d. per Acre Taxes, laid by an Act 11, GEO. III. amounting together to 550l. per Annum, which will discharge so much of the Debt, as to make a saving in the Interest of 275l. per Annum. He estimates too a saving of near 20l. per Annum in the Collection of those Taxes, it will not be so much, but this is a matter not worth Contention; and the Writer of this is willing to admit, that upon this Principle or Plan, the Fund for the Support of the North Bank of Moreton's Leame, Car Dyke, and the Folly Banks, may be increased to 700l. per Annum or thereabouts; more it certainly will not; but without considering now, the Sufficiency,

or Insufficiency of it — we will consider Mr. Maxwell's Plan for raising the Money, and the Effect it will have with respect to the Duke of Bedford.

His Grace's annual Tax at 1s. per Acre would be	£ 880	--	--
According to Mr. Maxwell's Information, it is	}	--	--
to continue for 13 Years. - - - - -			
			13

Amount thereof for the 13 Years, - - is	£ 11440	--	--
Mr. Maxwell calculates the Interest to amount to	3960	--	--

And his Grace's whole Payment to be equal to	£ 15400	--	--
which, N.B. is $17\frac{1}{2}$ Years Purchase.			

His Grace's whole Debt is 13200l. but	}	£ 625
Mr. Maxwell, proposes paying off		
only 12500l. of it, the Interest of		
which is, - - - - -		
The Tax to be purchased off, amounts	}	440
per Annum to - - - - -		

Annual Loss to his Grace - - -	£ 185		
Which at 30 Years Purchase - - - is	5550	--	--

Making the Difference, or Gain to his Grace, to be	£ 9850	--	--
--	--------	----	----

But this is by no means the true State of the Question; —
to consider it fairly we should suppose

The whole of his Grace's Debt to be paid off,	}	£ 660	--	--
amounting to 13200l. the present Interest of				
which - - - - - is				
His Grace's Tax to be purchased off at 30 Years	}	440	--	--
Purchase, which raises that Sum, will be				

Loss to his Grace - - - - - per Annum	£ 220	--	--
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Which is equal to a perpetual Tax of 3d. per Acre

And that	£.	s.	d.
6d. per Acre purchased off at 30 years Purchase, }	--	15	--
is certainly - - - - - }			

carried over	--	15	--
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	Brought over	£.	s.	d.
		--	15	--
But the Value of an Annuity or Tax	£.	s.	d.	
of 1s. to continue for 13 Years is not	--	9	5	
as Mr. Maxwell states it worth $17\frac{1}{2}$				
years Purchase or 17s. 6d. nor is it				
worth quite 9 years and 5 months, or				
So that Mr. Maxwell has mistated this	--	8	1	
Charge, - - - - -				
	--	17	6	

or nearly half;—and Sir Sampson
Gideon's also!

To give 17s. 6d. even if it was for 13s. ignorant
Fenmen will not be persuaded that is right.

We will suppose the above Plan of Mr.				
Maxwell's, not agreeable to his Grace,				
and this Tax of 1s. per Acre for 13	--	9	5	
Years laid, which is equal to - -				
Add to this a 6d. per Acre Tax, du-				
ring that Period, and which it is				
supposed may cease, or be suspended	--	4	$8\frac{1}{2}$	
then, - - - - - which is				

-- 14 $1\frac{1}{2}$

The Difference - - - is - - - -- $10\frac{1}{2}$
in favour of the new Tax, supposing them both to attain the same
Ends, viz. the purchasing off a 6d. per Acre Tax. — But the latter
Plan will attain a much more desirable one. The Suspension of the
6d. per Acre Tax laid per Act 27, GEO. II. which is considered as
much more so, than a total Cessation of it; and the Debts of his
Grace the Duke of Bedford and Sir Sampson Gideon, as well as
those of the other Creditors will be discharged without any Loss
to them at about 28 instead of 30 Years Purchase of the Tax.
From hence it appears, that in case the Fund Mr. Maxwell's
Plan of purchasing off the Taxes in Part, provides (for with
respect to purchasing off so much, as shall discharge, the whole
Debt, it is utterly impracticable) should not be thought sufficient,
and in all Probability, *it will not*, for who dare solemnly say,
THAT

THAT IT WILL— And knowing them, answer for, the dreadful Consequences, IF IT SHOULD NOT? — 700l. per Annum never has been sufficient, that, or something more was the deceitful annual Fund, from 1754 to 1763 when the First Breach happened; a temporary Tax may be laid, the Effects of which will not be so injurious as Mr. Maxwell represents—and whoever the Proposer of the Plan Mr. Maxwell alludes to may be, no doubt but his Precedents were the District Acts, and the last Act for Payment of the Commissioners Debt—and should such an Event take Place, that the Country shall ever arrive, at that fortunate Period, when the Sum of 1714l. 11s. 10d. per Annum shall remain for the Corporation Works after Payment of the 25000l. now owing thereon, and it shall be found to be more than is wanting for the Support of the Banks—let the Residue be applied towards the Commissioners Works, and the whole, or such Part as may be thought proper of the 6d. per Acre Tax per Act 27th, Geo. II. be suspended, which that Act sufficiently admits, until any Event may make it necessary to renew it, or any part of it, for a Time; by *these* means, a Reduction of the Taxes, will be obtained, equal to the most sanguine Wishes of those Proprietors, who are interested in the *General* Preservation of the Level, and a Fund provided in Times of necessity, without further Application to Parliament, or again having Recourse to that ruinous System of borrowing Money—and by the small Exertion of the Temporary Tax alluded to, the Country and every Individual therein, will have the happy Reflection of being assured, that they will have purchased for themselves, their Children, and Posterity, SECURITY—and will transmit to them, their Estates in the North Level, free from Debts, free from Danger, and something more than ideal wealth, or imaginary Property: but the direct contrary will be the Case, if Mr. Maxwell's Plan only is adopted.

The remaining Part of Mr. Maxwell's Reasons shall now be considered, relating to the Commissioners Funds and Works.

Which he states to be the Works of the Outfall only, and that during the last 9 Years, it has improved very rapidly, notwithstanding a part of the Original Fund of 990l. 11s. 2d. has been applied towards the Payment of the Debt of 14000l. and that there will remain at Christmas 1788, 990l. 11s. 2d. per Annum, which will be more than

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can possibly be wanted for the mere Purpose, of keeping good the Outfal; but previous to which, he states the Amount, &c. of the 6d. per Acre Tax—the Power to borrow 14000l. on the Credit thereof, which was accordingly done, and (as he says) laid out *on the Works of the Outfal*, together with another Tax subsequently laid for three Years, which expired in 1776 or 1777—he also takes Notice of the Tax laid for nine Years producing 1794l. 16s. 8d. per Annum, which he says together with the said 990l. 11s. 2d. was to be applied in the Works of the Outfal, and in Discharge of the 14000l. and that at the end of the nine Years, viz. at Christmas 1788 the Tax was to cease, leaving the Original Fund of 990l. 11s. 2d. for the Support of the Outfal, subject to be lowered at the Discretion of the Commissioners, and which, as it must be more than can be wanted for the *mere Purpose of keeping good the Outfal*—he thinks, the Proprietors of Estates have a Right to expect, that the Commissioners will lower from 6d. to 4d. an Acre.—So that *keeping good the Outfal* Mr. Maxwell states, as all that is necessary to be done, with this, the Commissioners Fund, and for which Purpose he appropriates a 4d. per Acre Tax.

But why he has so cautiously concealed, for he cannot be supposed to be ignorant of, the other Works belonging to the Commissioners, and which have hitherto been esteemed absolutely necessary for the Preservation of the Level, for the Support of which, this Fund is also subject, is best known to himself. And for the Information of those Ignorant Proprietors to whom Mr. Maxwell addresses his Publication, a State of the Commissioners Works is here subjoined, from which they may form some opinion of what Mr. Maxwell means by the *Works of the Outfal*, and of those Works, he has been pleased *not* to inform them of, as requiring *no* Attention, and to be supported at *no* Expence, viz.

DRAINS. — Kinderly's Cut at the Sea, the Reservoir, Shire Drain, and the several Rivers and Drains within the Level containing in Length about 48 Miles.

BANKS. — The Great Dam across Wisbich Channel, the Bank on the East side Kinderly's Cut, both Banks of the Reservoir and Shire Drain, and the Banks of the Five several Districts of the North Level, containing in Length upwards of 72 Miles.

SLUICES.

SLUICES.—Gunthorpe Sluice at the Sea—Hill's Sluice,—Clow's Crofs Sluice—and three Pair of Flood Gates within the North Level.

BRIDGES.—Nine Cart Bridges over feveral Publick Drains.

SALARIES, &c.—At least 120l. per Annum.

And these extensive Works, Mr. Maxwell fays have been supported fince the Year 1779 with a lefs Sum than 990l. 11s. 2d. per Annum, Part of it having been taken towards Payment of the Debt of 14000l but the Reason for this, he has as cautiously concealed, and which for the Information of thofe Proprietors, he addreffed is here given.

First observing, that it was not 2000l. as Mr. Maxwell fays, that was taken from the Original Fund towards Payment of the Debt, only 1238l. 16s. 8d. the Sum of 7676l. 3s. 10d. remaining during the nine Years for the fupport of Works, about 852l. 18s. a Year, on an Average

	£.	s.	d.
The Subfequent Tax which he fpeaks of laid for three Years, and to expire in 1776 or 1777, did not expire until Feb. 1 st 1778, and was a Tax of 2s. per Acre on the North Level, and 1s. on Portland, producing in all . . . upwards of	10700	--	--
Of the 14000l. in the Years 1773, 1774 and 1775 was borrowed	6000	--	--
In the Years 1774 and 1775 there was received of the Corporation from the Middle Level Revenues, and of the Tyd, and Newton Commissioners, towards opening Kinderly's Cut.	2000	--	--
Add the other Revenues of the Commissioners after deducting the Interest of their Debt from the Years 1773 to 1778 and which cannot be eftimated at lefs than	1300	--	--
Making in all	£ 20000	--	--

Which

Which Sum was laid out during that Period, in the Works before stated, in the opening Kinderly's Cut, and putting all the other Works belonging to the Commissioners into as complete a State as their Nature and Situation would admit. — So that in the Year 1779, the whole of the Works might be said to be nearly in a State of Perfection, and of course less expensive to preserve during the ensuing nine Years, and this has been the Reason why they have admitted of a Part of their Fund being appropriated towards Payment of the Debt of 14000*l*. but those Works are not in such a State of Perfection at this present Time. — But what is Mr. Maxwell's Statement of the Commissioners Works? And his Reasons for Reducing their Taxes?

Mr. Maxwell says, since the Year 1779 the Outfal has improved very rapidly; now the very reverse happens to be the case; if by the Outfal we are to suppose he means, the State of the Water at Gunthorpe Sluice, as any one may convince himself, not by what is *here* asserted, but by ocular Proof *there*. About the Year 1779 and during the Winter Season, the Threshold of that Sluice on the Sea side was frequently run dry, and the Low-water-mark in the Channel or New Cut *has been* considerably lower, but this is not the case now, neither was it last Winter, it was several Feet higher, and it is to be feared, it will be so again the ensuing, nevertheless the Outfal is undoubtedly in a good State, and the Floods in the Washes might descend much quicker, if all the Obstructions to their so doing, were removed.

This is the Result of an Enquiry into the Merits of Mr. Maxwell's Reasons, which at first from the Confidence with which he has delivered them, did almost *stagger Belief*, but on investigating, appear so exceedingly fallacious, that as a warm well wisher to the Prosperity of the Level, and Interest of Individuals therein, the Writer has submitted to their Consideration, trusting, that a Regard to his own Interest in the Level hath not misled him, nor that a too great Regard for the Interest of his Employer which he would certainly consider as his own, may not have misled Mr. Maxwell.—Sir Sampson Gideon hath very extensive Property in the Middle Level; that belonging to him in the North Level, from its Situation, at least the most valuable Part of it, may be supposed to be out of the Reach of Drowning from a Breach of the North Bank of Moreton's Leame, and not equally dependant with the rest of the Level, on great Part of the
Com-

Commissioners Works. No other Proprietor in the North Level is similarly situate, with Sir Sampson, but whose Property therein, *Let it be remembered*, is chiefly *Adventure Land*, which Circumstance probably may have occasioned him hitherto, tho' if reluctantly, to submit to the Shackles of those Taxes, of which Mr. Maxwell so much complains.

A Palliative or slight Relief, a *small and weak North Bank*, may suit Sir Sampson Gideon's Case; but that nothing less than a radical Cure, and which is so easily to be obtained, (at the most that it can be called scarce one Year's Rent—but if a Suspension of the 6d. per Acre Tax, takes place and of which there can be no doubt, at little, or no Expence) can preserve the North Level in General, are the Sentiments of

A NORTH LEVEL PROPRIETOR.

August 29th, 1788.

F I N I S.



